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DO JUVENILE CURFEW LAWS WORK? A TIME-SERIES ANALYSIS OF THE NEW ORLEANS LAW*

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Juvenile curfew laws are one of the most recent weapons for combating delinquency, but little is known about their effectiveness. This study examines the impact of the juvenile curfew law in New Orleans, Louisiana on victimizations, juvenile victimizations, and juvenile arrests. Interrupted

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time-series analyses are used to compare victimizations and arrests before and after the curfew was implemented. The results show the ineffectiveness of the curfew. Victimization, juvenile victimizations, and juvenile arrests during curfew hours did not decrease significantly after the law went into effect; some victimizations during non-curfew hours increased significantly after the law was implemented.

Juvenile curfew laws are one of the most recent weapons in the war on delinquency. Curfews are extremely popular: 80 percent of the 200 largest cities in the United States (with populations of 100,000 or more) have juvenile curfew laws. Moreover, since 1990, 30 percent of these cities have enacted a new curfew, have modified a dormant curfew, or have increased enforcement of their curfews (Ruefle and Reynolds 1996). Curfew laws are not restricted to the largest cities: Reynolds (1996) found that such laws are in effect in 75 percent of 60 moderate-sized cities (with populations between 10,000 and 100,000).

Despite the popularity of curfew laws, little is known about their effectiveness. Two studies report small decreases in offending during curfew hours, but also small increases during non-curfew hours. Hunt and Weiner (1977) found that index offenses (homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, auto theft, and arson) decreased 3 to 6 percent during curfew hours in the first month after Detroit's curfew law went into effect. Yet, they also reported a similarly sized increase in these offenses between 2 and 4 p.m. More recently, Wright et al. (1994) discovered that juvenile arrests decreased slightly during curfew hours after Cincinnati's curfew went into effect, but they increased during non-curfew hours and did not decrease overall. A third study found that no crime decreased significantly as a result of juvenile curfews enacted in California (Macallair and Males 1998).

The present study was designed to examine the effectiveness of the juvenile curfew law in New Orleans, Louisiana. The current law, which went into effect on June 1, 1994, is the most restrictive juvenile curfew law in the United States. During curfew hours, youths under 17 are prohibited from being in public places, including the premises of business establishments, unless accompanied by a legal guardian or authorized adult. During the school year, the curfew begins at 8:00 p.m. on weeknights and at 11:00 p.m. on weekends. During the summer, it begins at 9:00 p.m. on weeknights and at 11:00 p.m. on weekends. In some cases, adolescents may be in public during curfew hours, such as when traveling to and from work; when attending school or religious, civic, or city-

sponsored events if suitable adult supervision is present; in emergency situations; for reasonable errands; and when exercising First Amendment rights.

Although the law restricts adolescents' access to public places during specific hours, it provides no legal punishments for the minor. Curfew violators are either warned and sent home or transported to the curfew center. The sanctions focus on the legal guardians: They can be fined, ordered to obtain counseling or attend parenting classes, or perform up to 60 hours of community service. This focus on parents and their responsibility to control their children is deliberate, as demonstrated in this statement by Mayor Marc Morial: "The objective is to open new lines of communication, begin a dialogue between parent and child, and we hope, set new ground rules within the home" (1995:A21). Business operators also face legal punishments because they can be fined up to \$500 and/or imprisoned as long as six months for allowing minors to remain on the premises during curfew hours.

THE THEORETICAL BASES OF JUVENILE CURFEW LAWS

Although the connection is not stated explicitly, juvenile curfew laws are loosely related to several theories of juvenile delinquency, particularly opportunity, social control, deterrence, and routine activities theories. Thus an examination of these theories and their implications for curfew laws is useful for discussing why curfew laws are, or are not, successful in reducing delinquency. The purpose of this paper, however, is not to test theoretical links. Curfews draw only on particular aspects of the theories; thus our findings cannot be used to test the theories empirically.

According to the first-mentioned theory, opportunity theory, access to legitimate and illegitimate means to achieve culturally acceptable goals is stratified by class. As Cloward (1959) states, neither conventional nor illegitimate methods are infinitely available; access to these techniques depends on the person's position in the social structure. When Cloward uses the term *means*, he is referring both to access to environments in which to learn the values and skills associated with a particular role and to opportunities to play the role that has been learned. Thus *means* refers both to learning structures and to opportunity structures (Cloward 1959).

Curfew laws attempt to alter juveniles' access to illegitimate means by reducing their opportunities not only to learn but also to commit illegal behaviors. Curfew laws strive directly to curtail some opportunities to commit delinquency by forcing juveniles to remain at home in the evening and through the night. They also

attempt indirectly to reduce juveniles' opportunities to learn delinquency by decreasing the amount of time spent without adult supervision. If curfew laws reduce opportunities to learn and to commit delinquent behavior, then juvenile delinquency should diminish when these laws are implemented and enforced.

The second theory, social control, focuses on factors that inhibit juvenile delinquency. Both Hirschi (1969) and Nye (1958) stress the relevance of parental supervision for this purpose. Hirschi suggested that "virtual supervision"—the psychological presence of the parents during opportunities to commit delinquency (Cernkovich and Giordano 1987:299; Hirschi 1969:88)—will reduce delinquent behavior. Thus youths who believe that the parents know where they are, and with whom, will be less delinquent (Hirschi 1969:88-89). Nye also hypothesized that parental supervision—parents' control of the adolescent's time away from home and the choice of companions and activities (Nye 1958:7)—will decrease delinquent acts. Increasing parents' supervision of their children is one aim of curfew laws. Mayor Marc Morial alludes to this purpose when he claims that one goal of the curfew law is to "set new ground rules within the home" (1995:A21). Research demonstrates that parental supervision in fact reduces delinquent activities (e.g., Barnes, Farrell, and Banerjee 1994; Cernkovich and Giordano 1987; Denton and Kampfe 1994; Kafka and London 1991; McCord 1991; Messner and Krohn 1990; Peterson et al. 1994; Sampson and Laub 1994).

The third theory related to curfew laws is deterrence theory. As Siegel and Senna (1997:95) point out, juvenile justice authorities historically have been reluctant to rely on deterrence-based punishments as opposed to treatment to alter juveniles' behavior. This reluctance is evident in the seemingly curious fact that juvenile curfew laws, such as the law in effect in New Orleans, punish the parents for their children's behavior.

Finally, routine activities theorists claim that the rate and the distribution of direct-contact predatory crime (crimes against persons and crimes against property) are affected by the daily routines of life (Cohen and Felson 1979). Cohen and Felson suggested that such crime is more likely to occur when a suitable target (person or property) is available, when a capable guardian is absent, and when a motivated offender is present. As Siegel and Senna (1997:93) state, "[T]he greater the opportunity there is for criminals and victims to interact, the greater the probability of crime; reduce the interaction, and the opportunity for crime will decline."

Curfew laws obviously strive to change the routines of potential victims and potential criminals by forcing juveniles to be at home or to be supervised by responsible adults during curfew hours. If

these laws keep unsupervised adolescents out of public places during the curfew hours, then juveniles will be less available as suitable targets, and victimizations of juveniles will decrease. In addition, when juveniles are at home rather than on the streets, crime should be reduced if juveniles are a large category of motivated offenders who commit direct contact predatory crimes.

On the basis of this brief theoretical review, apparently there is reason to believe that juvenile curfews can reduce delinquency. If the juvenile curfew is effective, victimizations of people of all ages and victimizations of juveniles during curfew hours should decline significantly after the law takes effect. This should be the case because fewer adolescents will be unsupervised in public during curfew hours; thus their chances of being offenders and/or victims will be reduced. In addition, if the law accomplishes its goal, arrests of juveniles during curfew hours for offenses other than curfew violations should decrease significantly after the law is implemented because fewer unsupervised adolescents will be in public and thus able to commit offenses. Victimizations overall, victimizations of juveniles, and arrests of juveniles during non-curfew hours should remain unaffected.

DATA AND METHODS

We used two sets of data in this study; both were archival records from the New Orleans Police Department. One data set contained official victim reports; the other consisted of official juvenile arrests. Both covered two years, one year before and one year after the curfew law was enacted; hence they span the period from June 1, 1993 through May 31, 1995.

The victimization data set was a collection of official victim reports, which included codes for both the offense and the victim's age. The type of offense was either a property offense (aggravated, simple, residence, and safe burglary; theft; theft of a bicycle; theft from the interior or exterior of an automobile; automobile theft; pickpocketing; and shoplifting) or a violent offense (homicide; aggravated and simple battery; aggravated assault; aggravated and simple rape; armed robbery; simple robbery; and purse snatching).

We used the victim's age to separate violent and property victimizations of juveniles from victimizations of people of all ages. We created four series from the victim reports: property victimizations of people of all ages, violent victimizations of people of all ages, property victimizations of juveniles (under age 17 in Louisiana), and violent victimizations of juveniles. The victimization data contained duplicate and incomplete records, which we removed; the

remaining data contained 122,617 complete and unique victim report records. In addition, we deleted the first four weeks of the victim reports because the information was incomplete. Therefore, we used 100 weeks of victim report records: 48 weeks before the curfew law was enacted, and 52 weeks after the law went into effect.

The juvenile arrest data set consisted of official police records of arrests of people under age 17. This data set also contained duplicate and incomplete records, which we removed. We also omitted arrests of juveniles only for violating the curfew law itself. The final data set contained 19,869 usable juvenile arrest records.

In summary, we examined five dependent variables in this study: property victimizations of people of all ages, violent victimizations of people of all ages, property victimizations of juveniles, violent victimizations of juveniles, and juvenile arrests. We counted victimizations and juvenile arrests separately, depending on whether the incident occurred during curfew hours or non-curfew hours. Victimizations and arrests that took place between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. during the school year (September through May) and those which took place between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. during the summer (June through August) were categorized as occurring during curfew hours; those which took place between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. during the school year and between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. during the summer were classified as occurring during non-curfew hours. It was not possible to alter the curfew hours on the weekends (Friday and Saturday) because of the complexity involved; therefore, we introduced systematic error that inflated curfew-hour victimizations and juvenile arrests by about 1 percent. This error, however, was the same both in the weeks before the curfew was implemented and in the weeks after the curfew was in effect; hence it should not affect the comparison of these two periods.

We used three independent variables. The first was the week within the time series, which varied from 5 (the first week in July 1993) to 104 (the last week in May 1995). The second independent variable was curfew implementation, a dummy variable coded 0 before enactment of the curfew law (before June 1, 1994) and 1 after the law went into effect. The third independent variable was enforcement hours, which reflected the amount of police officers' time dedicated to enforcing the curfew.

We used time series to analyze the data. Although ARIMA is usually used to analyze time-series data, we employed regression in this study for two reasons.¹ First, the data did not violate any of

¹ In fact, we intended and prepared to use ARIMA. In the summer of 1997, the first author took the ARIMA course at SPSS in Chicago and learned that ARIMA was not needed to analyze our data. Steve Schacht (the instructor) and the first

the assumptions of regression. The series were stationary; we saw no evidence of any seasonality patterns. Second, ARIMA assumes that the data are autocorrelated. When no autocorrelation is present, ARIMA is not required and has no advantages over regression.

For the victimization data, we calculated a separate equation for each combination of dependent variable (property victimization, violent victimization, juvenile property victimization, and juvenile violent victimization) and time of day (non-curfew hours or curfew hours). Thus eight regression models were necessary for the victimization data. Two additional models were needed to examine juvenile arrests during curfew and non-curfew hours. We employed a linear spline model without continuity requirements. This technique enables estimation of the trend for the entire time series, allowing the slope and the intercept after the curfew law was implemented to differ from the slope and the intercept before the curfew went into effect (Cook and Campbell 1979; Montgomery and Peck 1992).²

Because the quadratic terms were not significant, we eliminated them from the model. The final model examined for each dependent series was³

$$y = \alpha_1 + \beta_1 t + \alpha_2 I + \beta_2 (t - t_0) I + \gamma X.$$

Translated, the final model (without quadratic terms) was⁴

predicted value = intercept + slope (week) + curfew implementation + change in slope (week) + enforcement hours.

In this equation, the latter three coefficients were the important ones because they signaled respectively a significant change in the

author inspected the data, testing it for autocorrelation, and found no evidence of any autocorrelation. Moreover, we consulted Dr. Terry Watkins, a mathematics professor at the University of New Orleans, who analyzed the data with ARIMA and concluded that it added nothing and was not appropriate for this study. E-mail communications with David Nichols at SPSS in February 1999 confirmed the choice of regression rather than ARIMA. Mr. Nichols, principal support statistician and manager of statistical support, at SPSS Inc., stated, "ARIMA models fit the autocorrelation and partial autocorrelation pattern[s] in data. If there are no such patterns, then these models are not needed. . . .if there is no autocorrelation in the residuals, then that part of the OLS assumptions [is] met and ARIMA would have no advantage."

² This is equivalent to splicing together two time series, one before and one after the curfew went into effect, and calculating the differences in the slope and the intercept before and after the curfew was implemented.

³ The final term in the equation was enforcement hours. This variable was included only in the equations calculated for victimizations and arrests during curfew hours.

⁴ We included enforcement hours only in the equations calculated for victimizations and arrests during curfew hours. The change-in-slope term is not an interaction term, although it is the difference between the slope before the curfew was implemented and the slope after the curfew took effect. We coded this 0 for the 48 weeks before the curfew was implemented and 1 through 52 for the 52 weeks after the curfew took effect.

level of victimizations or juvenile arrests after the curfew was implemented, a significant change in the trend of victimizations or juvenile arrests after the curfew went into effect, and a significant effect of enforcing the curfew. Specifically, when the coefficient for curfew implementation was significant, the number of events (victimizations or juvenile arrests) after implementation of the curfew was significantly different from the number of events before the curfew went into effect. When the coefficient for the change in slope was significant, the trend of the events after the curfew went into effect was significantly different from the trend before implementation. Moreover, this coefficient was the actual difference between the two trends. When the coefficient for enforcement hours was significant, the events after implementation were altered by the amount of police time dedicated to enforcing the law. We examined plots of the residuals from the regression equations, but found no indication of heteroscedasticity. Moreover, the Durbin-Watson statistics showed no sign of autocorrelation; the influence statistics (individual t -values and Cook's D) showed that no problematic outliers were present.

RESULTS

We expected that, if the juvenile curfew law was effective, victimizations and juvenile arrests during curfew hours would be significantly lower after the curfew took effect, while victimizations and juvenile arrests during non-curfew hours would not be influenced significantly. Our results do not support these expectations.

The implementation of the curfew law did not significantly reduce victimizations, juvenile victimizations, nor juvenile arrests during curfew hours. First, violent victimizations of people of all ages during curfew hours were significantly affected only by the amount of police time spent enforcing the curfew law (see Tables 1 and 2). These victimizations decreased significantly when enforcement was greater, but they returned to their pre-curfew level and trend as enforcement diminished (see Figure 1).

Second, property victimizations of people of all ages during curfew hours increased significantly after the curfew law took effect (see Tables 1 and 2 and Figure 2). Moreover, during the weeks after the curfew law was implemented, these victimizations decreased significantly more slowly than before the curfew took effect, and the number of these occurrences at the end of the series was higher than before the curfew.

Third, juvenile property victimizations during curfew hours were related significantly to enforcement hours: They were higher when enforcement of the curfew was greater, but returned to a level

Table 1. Regressions of Victimizations and Juvenile Arrests during Curfew and Non-Curfew Hours

	Violent	Property	Juvenile Property
Curfew Hours			
Intercept	151.58***	510.17***	107.51***
Week		-1.038***	-.224*
		-2.113***	-.130*
Curfew		.429*	
		50.516*	
Change in slope		.485*	
		1.666*	
Enforcement hours	-.230*		.375***
	-.006*		.007***
R ²	.053*	.134**	-.145***
Non-Curfew Hours			
Intercept	112.32***	398.03***	-22.89***
Week			.625**
			.155**
Curfew			-.474*
			-6.808*
Change in slope	.411***	.219*	
	.467***	.476*	
R ²	.169***	.048*	-.103*

Notes: Only significant relationships are displayed. There were no significant models for juvenile property victimizations during non-curfew hours, juvenile violent victimizations during curfew hours, and juvenile arrests. Standardized coefficients are shown in bold type. "Change in slope" is the change in the slope after the curfew went into effect (Weeks 53-104) in relation to the slope before the curfew was implemented (Weeks 5-52).

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

close to their pre-curfew amount and to the same slowly decreasing trend when enforcement was reduced (see Tables 1 and 2 and Figure 3).

Fourth, juvenile arrests were not affected significantly by the implementation of the curfew law, nor by its enforcement.⁵

Fifth, as further evidence of the lack of influence of the curfew law on victimizations, juvenile victimizations, and juvenile arrests, the proportions of variance explained, were very small, even when significant.

Sixth, we found only small changes in the number of events—about 20 or fewer—from just before the curfew went into effect to the first year after the curfew was implemented. Thus victimizations, juvenile victimizations, and juvenile arrests during curfew hours did not decrease significantly after the curfew law went into effect; the curfew had very little effect on these occurrences.

⁵ Graphs of the series that were not affected by curfew implementation and enforcement are available on request from the first author.

Table 2. Summary of Results

	Effect of Curfew Implementation			Effect of Curfew Enforcement		
<hr/>						
Curfew Hours						
All violent victimizations				-	A	T
All property victimizations	+	A	P			
Juvenile violent victimizations						
Juvenile property victimizations				+	A	T
Juvenile arrests						
Non-Curfew Hours						
All violent victimizations	+	G	P			
All property victimizations	+	G	P			
Juvenile violent victimizations	-	A	T			
Juvenile property victimizations						
Juvenile arrests						

Notes: + stands for a significant positive association; - stands for a significant negative association; A means that the change was abrupt; G indicates that the change was gradual; T indicates that the change was temporary; P means that the change lasted throughout the year after the curfew was implemented. No significant effects were found for juvenile violent victimizations during curfew hours, juvenile property victimizations during non-curfew hours, or juvenile arrests.

Seventh, contrary to the expectation, victimizations during non-curfew hours were affected by the implementation of the curfew law. In fact, violent and property victimizations of people of all ages began to increase significantly after the curfew went into effect and continued to increase throughout the remainder of the series (see Tables 1 and 2 and Figures 4 and 5). The levels of these victimizations had remained steady during the 48 weeks before the curfew began; after the law was implemented, however, these victimizations began to increase significantly, especially violent victimizations.

Eighth, juvenile violent victimizations during non-curfew hours showed a significant, temporary decrease when the curfew law went into effect (see Tables 1 and 2 and Figure 6). After this initial decrease, however, these victimizations increased at the same rate as their rate of increase before the curfew law was implemented. These differences, however, were also small: about 20 or less. Thus victimizations and juvenile victimizations during non-curfew hours were affected by the implementation of the curfew law.

In summary, our findings did not support the expectation that victimizations, juvenile victimizations, and juvenile arrests during curfew hours would be reduced significantly when the juvenile curfew law was implemented. Hence the juvenile curfew law was not effective in reducing crime in New Orleans during its first year of implementation.

Figure 1. All Violent Victimizations during Curfew Hours

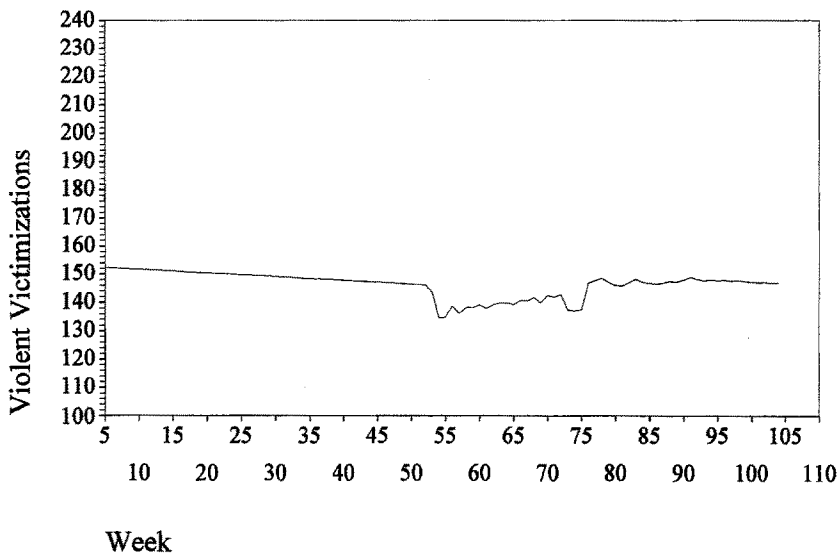


Figure 2. All Property Victimizations during Curfew Hours

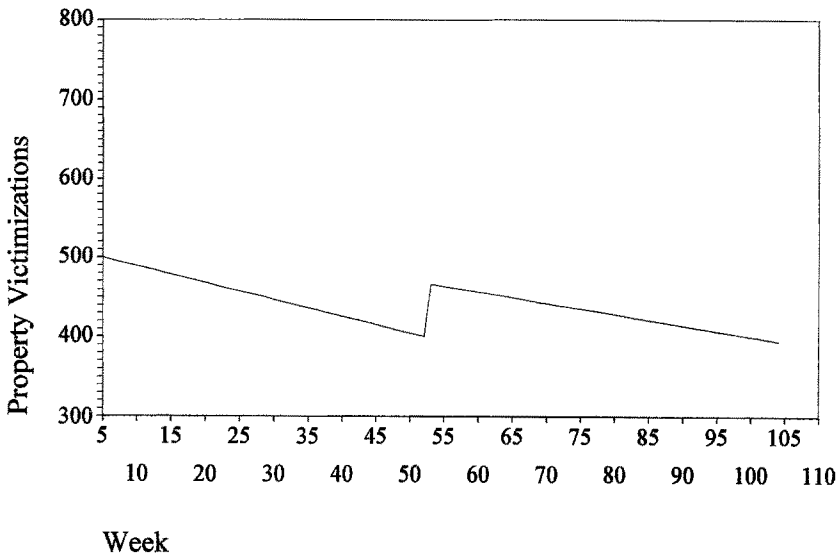


Figure 3. Juvenile Property Victimizations during Curfew Hours

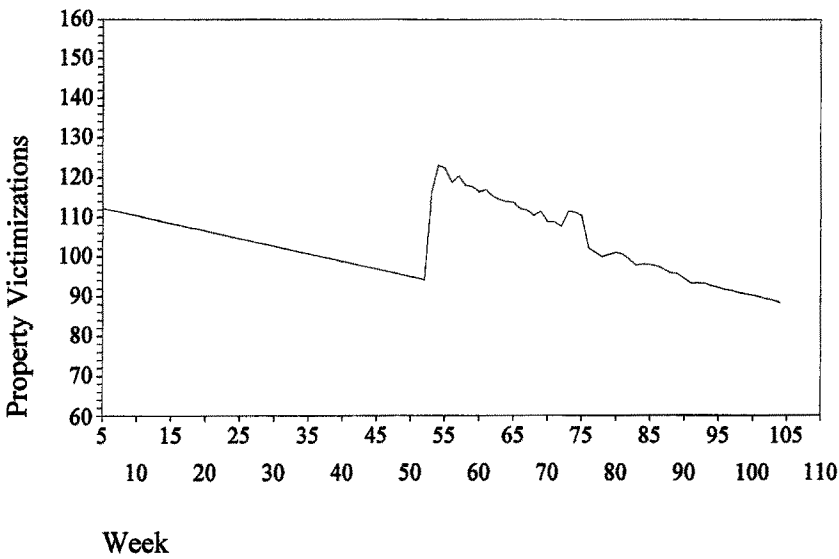


Figure 4. All Violent Victimizations during Non-Curfew Hours

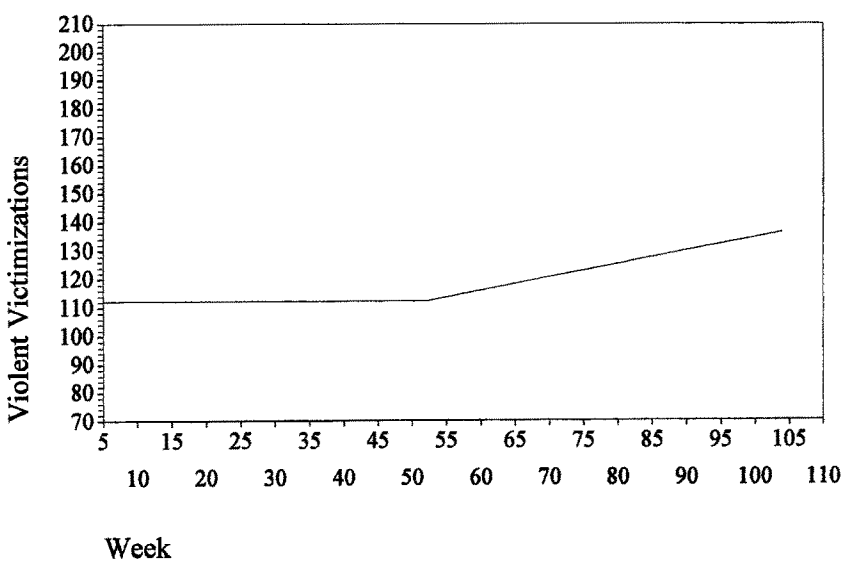


Figure 5. All Property Victimizations during Non-Curfew Hours

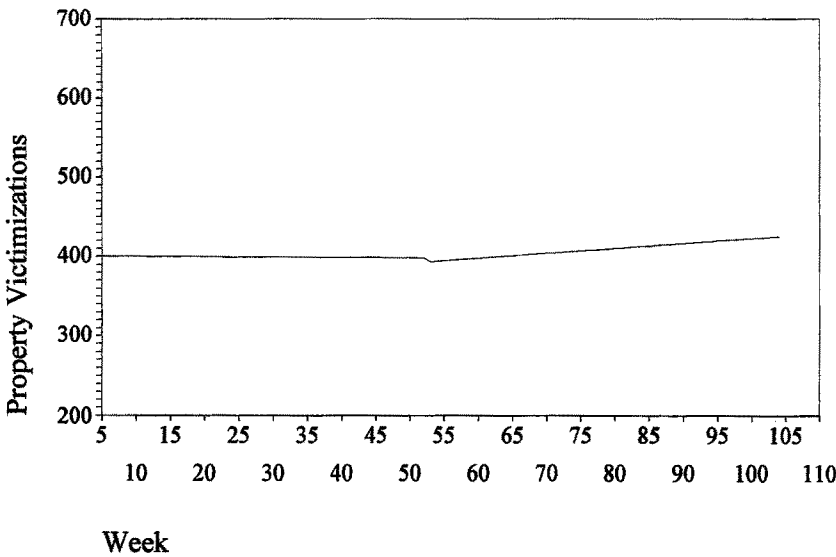
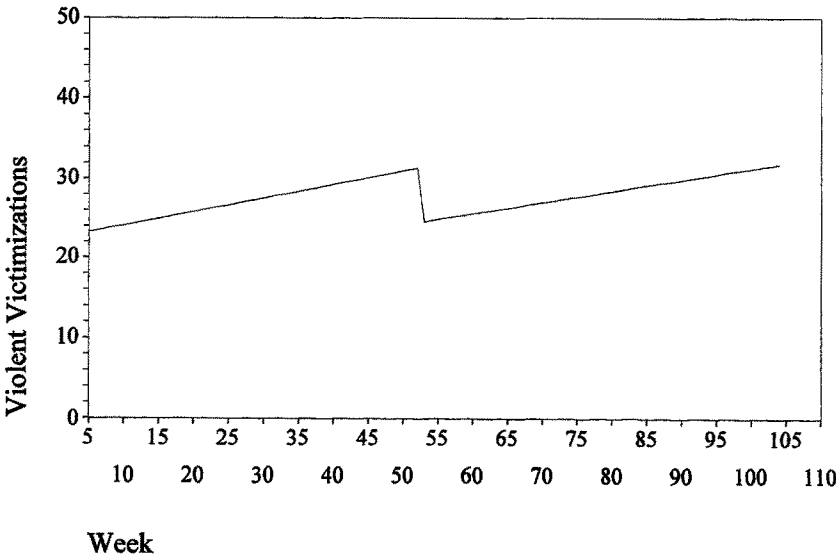


Figure 6. Juvenile Violent Victimizations during Non-Curfew Hours



Although the curfew law was not effective in reducing victimizations and juvenile arrests, the findings demonstrated some patterns. In fact, they varied along four dimensions: the type of victimization, the victim's age, the time of day (curfew or non-curfew hours), and the aspect of the curfew law (implementation or enforcement).

Property and violent victimizations were influenced differentially by the curfew law: Property victimizations tended to increase after the curfew went into effect, while violent victimizations were more likely to decrease. During curfew hours, property victimizations of people of all ages increased abruptly and we observed more of these victimizations one year after the curfew was implemented than before the curfew. Juvenile property victimizations also increased abruptly, but returned to the level and trend prevalent before the curfew. During non-curfew hours, property victimizations of people of all ages began to increase after the curfew went into effect. In contrast, violent victimizations of people of all ages during curfew hours and violent victimizations of juveniles during non-curfew hours decreased abruptly, although temporarily. Contrary to the pattern, however, violent victimizations of people of all ages during non-curfew hours began to increase after the curfew law went into effect. Yet one year after the law was implemented, we found an increase in both property and violent victimizations because the more permanent changes were increases, while the decreases were temporary.

The outcome also differed by the victim's age. The curfew law had a stronger effect on victimizations of people of all ages (four significant effects) than of juveniles (two significant effects). Moreover, all of the effects that remained one year after implementation of the curfew occurred for victimizations of people of all ages: property victimizations during curfew hours, and violent and property victimizations during non-curfew hours. The significant changes for juvenile victimizations were temporary: property victimizations during curfew hours, and violent victimizations during non-curfew hours. Thus the increase in victimizations one year after implementation reflected victimizations of people of all ages, not victimizations of juveniles.

The results also varied by the time of day. During curfew hours, changes in victimizations were abrupt and tended to be temporary; during non-curfew hours, these changes tended to be gradual and permanent. All three changes during curfew hours were abrupt, and two of the three were temporary (violent victimizations of people of all ages and juvenile property victimizations). Two of

the three changes during non-curfew hours were gradual and permanent (violent and property victimizations of people of all ages); only one was abrupt and temporary (juvenile violent victimizations).

The findings differed by the aspect of the curfew law: implementation or enforcement. Implementation was associated with two significant changes in the numbers of victimizations—the increase in property victimizations during curfew hours and the decrease in juvenile violent victimizations during non-curfew hours—and with three significant increases in the trends of victimizations—property victimizations during curfew hours (these occurrences decreased more slowly after the curfew law took effect) and violent and property victimizations during non-curfew hours (these occurrences began to increase after the curfew took effect).

Enforcement of the curfew significantly influenced only violent victimizations of people of all ages and juvenile property victimizations; these effects were temporary. Violent victimizations had a significant negative relation to enforcement hours (more enforcement, fewer violent victimizations); juvenile property victimizations showed a significant positive association with enforcement hours (more enforcement, more juvenile property victimizations). In both cases, when enforcement was reduced, these victimizations returned to the level and trend that had existed before the curfew was implemented.

DISCUSSION

The findings show that the juvenile curfew law in New Orleans, although restrictive, was ineffective for reducing victimizations, victimizations of juveniles, and juvenile arrests. All changes found in victimizations were small, half were temporary, and four of the six significant changes were increases. Hence the outcome of the present study is similar to those of other research (Hunt and Weiner 1977; Macallair and Males 1998; Wright et al. 1994) that demonstrate the ineffectiveness of juvenile curfew laws for combating crime.

The current investigation also hints at possible changes in victimization patterns, consisting of initial decreases in violent victimizations and initial increases in property victimizations when the curfew law was implemented. Also, the results imply that the curfew had a greater effect on victimizations of people of all ages than on juvenile victimizations. In addition, our findings suggest that changes in victimization during curfew hours are abrupt and mainly temporary, while effects during non-curfew hours are more gradual and more likely to be permanent. Moreover, the findings

show that the number of enforcement hours has only a temporary impact on victimizations.

Why is such a seemingly reasonable law so ineffective in controlling crime? We suggest several possible reasons.

Juveniles and Crime

First, juvenile curfew laws will result in large, significant reductions in crime and victimization only if (1) juveniles are a large percentage of criminals; (2) juveniles are a large percentage of victims; (3) the curfews are in effect during the periods when juveniles are most likely to commit crimes; and (4) juveniles comply with curfew laws. In fact, although juveniles account for a greater proportion of persons arrested than of the total population, they are responsible for only a relatively small proportion of crimes overall in the United States. According to the Uniform Crime Reports (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1961-1996), juveniles (under age 18) have not accounted for more than 25 percent of the annual total arrests since 1975, and they have constituted less than 20 percent of persons arrested each year since 1980.

Moreover, juveniles (under age 18) are not the largest category of victims of serious violent offenses. Again, juveniles are a greater proportion of the people victimized than of the total population, but they are not the majority of crime victims. In 1994, juveniles were about 24 percent of the victims of violent crimes, ranging from 10 percent of the victims of attempted robbery with injury and 15 percent of the victims of rape and attempted rape to 28 percent of the victims of simple assaults with or without injury (Sickmund, Snyder, and Poe-Yamagata 1997).

In addition, the curfew laws are not in effect during the period when juveniles are most likely to commit crimes. A large proportion of juvenile crimes are committed after school, before the curfew starts. About 20 percent of violent juvenile crimes are committed between 2 and 6 p.m. on school days (Sickmund et al. 1997; Snyder, Sickmund, and Poe-Yamagata 1996). On school days, violent offenses and gang crimes committed by juveniles peak at about 3 p.m. (Sickmund et al. 1997).

Further, juveniles may not comply with the curfew laws. During the first year of the New Orleans curfew law, 3,572 youths were taken into custody solely for curfew violations. Therefore, because juveniles under age 17 are not a large percentage of criminals or victims, because they are more likely to commit offenses during times not included in curfews, and because they do not comply with curfew laws, the juvenile arrests and victimization series examined

here were not altered much by implementation and enforcement of the curfew law, even when the effect was significant.

Police Action

Second, police crackdowns—sudden increases in police activity to raise the likelihood of offense detection—tend not to deter crime in the long run (Sherman 1990). The result is usually only an initial, temporary deterrent effect (Ross 1973; Ross, McCleary, and Epperlein 1982; Sherman 1990). Our findings in the present study are similar to those of other investigations of the influence of police crackdowns: The changes in victimizations during curfew hours were abrupt, primarily temporary, and very small. Previous researchers also reported that police crackdowns are extremely costly to maintain (Ross 1973; Ross et al. 1982; Sherman 1990). Curfew enforcement in New Orleans was no exception: The New Orleans Police Department spent more than \$600,000 in overtime funds for curfew enforcement during the first year of the curfew law although the department was understaffed by more than 300 officers.

Possible Theoretical Explanations

The third possible reason for the ineffectiveness of the juvenile curfew law is that such laws are related only tangentially to theories of delinquency. They do not draw on the full power of the theories, nor fully utilize the research stimulated by the theories. We revisit the four theories presented earlier and examine them for insights into the ineffectiveness of the New Orleans juvenile curfew law.

Opportunity Theory. As noted previously, opportunity theory points out the importance of examining access to illegitimate means. Juvenile curfew laws do not reduce adolescents' access to illegitimate means; youths still have many opportunities to commit delinquent acts. They can engage in crimes during non-curfew hours rather than hours covered by the curfew laws. The findings of Hunt and Weiner (1977) and Wright et al. (1994) suggest the possibility of temporal displacement. Similarly, the present study shows a permanent increase in victimizations of people of all ages during non-curfew hours, although the increase was small (approximately 20 additional property crimes and 20 additional violent victimizations).

Social control theories. Social control theories, as presented previously, emphasize the importance of parental supervision. Although the possible sanctions entailed in curfew laws, including the New

Orleans curfew law, include counseling and parent training classes, these laws apparently are based on the assumption that parents know how to relate to and supervise their children so as to reduce, rather than increase, deviant activities. Mayor Morial (1995:A21) suggested that the juvenile curfew law can improve communication between parents and children and, it is hoped, establish new rules. Unfortunately, there is much evidence that many parents do not know how to relate to or supervise their children. In fact, poor relationships between parents and children, poor communication, poor supervision and discipline, family deviance, and family conflict and violence increase delinquency. (For a more fully detailed discussion of the family's influence on delinquency, see Seydlitz and Jenkins 1998.)

Deterrence Theory. Deterrence theory claims that the threat of punishment makes people forgo crime. The curfew law, however, includes no punishment for the juvenile who violates it beyond the negative aspects of being taken into custody and the possibility of parental punishments. Thus, according to deterrence theory, the juvenile has no reason to refrain from appearing in public during curfew hours. Therefore youths who are not deterred by the curfew law find more opportunities to commit crime, and possibly even increase their opportunities to learn how to commit crime. In addition, if family relations are poor, the juvenile may not be deterred by the thought that his or her parents will be arrested because he or she violated the curfew law. In fact, in households marked by mutual rejection, this possibility could be an incentive to violation. As mentioned previously, more than 3,500 juveniles in New Orleans were not deterred by the curfew law, and were taken into custody during the first year of the curfew.

Routine activities theory. Routine activities theorists argue that a direct-contact predatory crime is more probable when a suitable target is available, when a capable guardian is absent, and when a motivated offender is present. On the basis of our current findings, it appears that routines were not altered so as to reduce the presence of juveniles as suitable targets or motivated offenders. Specifically, juvenile arrests were not altered significantly by implementation of the curfew. In addition, only two juvenile victimization series were influenced by the curfew, and these effects were temporary and small. Osgood et al. (1996) found that opportunities for crime arise when peers are together without adult supervision. Such unsupervised togetherness can occur during non-curfew hours as well as hours included in the curfew. Further, offending and victimization are highly correlated (Clarke and Felson

1993), and curfew laws contain nothing that necessarily breaks this connection. Moreover, the cost of attempting to alter routines to lessen the availability of suitable, unguarded targets and/or motivated offenders is enormous.

A major problem with routine activities theory is that it does not include domestic violence or child abuse as direct-contact predatory violations. In fact, Cohen and Felson (1979) claim that routine activities near or in the home and among family members have a lower risk of victimization. Similarly, Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo (1978), in their lifestyle theory, state that people are safer if they spend more time in the home and with family members. Unfortunately, however, the home and family members are not safe for people who are victims of domestic violence and child abuse; therefore some juveniles may be safer on the streets, and many of these adolescents run away from home (For an excellent discussion of this issue, see Chesney-Lind and Shelden 1998.)

Major Correlates of Delinquency

The fourth possible explanation of the ineffectiveness of juvenile curfew laws is that they do not address any of the major correlates of delinquency. These major factors include peers, schools and the family.

Peers. Curfew laws do not directly reduce adolescents' exposure to delinquent peers and friends. Many adolescents are unsupervised from the time when school ends to the beginning of curfew hours. Hence they have several hours to spend with friends and to learn about and engage in delinquent deeds. Many studies demonstrate that youths who have delinquent friends are more likely to commit deviant acts, often in the company of these friends (e.g., Agnew 1991; Erickson and Jensen 1977; Fagan and Wexler 1987; Giordano 1978; Giordano and Cernkovich 1979; Johnson 1979; Matsueda and Heimer 1987; Messner and Krohn 1990; Patterson and Dishion 1985; Warr 1993a; Warr and Stafford 1991). Delinquent friends increase many types of deviance, especially substance abuse (e.g., Aseltine 1995; Dinges and Oetting 1993; Kafka and London 1991; Kandel and Davies 1991). (For a longer review of the relationship between delinquent friends and delinquency, see Seydlitz and Jenkins 1998.) More delinquency might be prevented if adults established places where adolescents could congregate and engage in positive activities with appropriate adult supervision during this time rather than paying police officers to find unsupervised adolescents and take them into custody. In the past, organized activities after school and in the evenings fulfilled this need.

School. Similarly, curfew laws do not affect juveniles' relationships with the school, nor how problems in this relationship can motivate delinquency and increase exposure to delinquent friends. School reduces delinquency for youths who are committed to school (believe in the goals of school), like school, and are achieving in school; but it can increase delinquency for those who are not committed, who dislike school, and are not doing well in school (e.g., Agnew 1985; Denton and Kampfe 1994; Fagan and Wexler 1987; Frease 1973; Hagan 1991; Jenkins 1995; Joseph 1995; Krohn and Massey 1980; Lauritsen 1994; Mann 1981; Pink 1982; Rankin 1980; Schafer and Polk 1972a, 1972b; White, Pandina, and LaGrange 1987). Seydlitz and Jenkins (1998:71) summarize the problem as follows: "[S]tudents who do poorly in school are shunned by teachers and other students, dislike school, view school as dull and boring, devalue themselves, develop a negative attitude toward schoolwork and school rules, perceive school as irrelevant, spend more time with friends, have more friends who are dropouts, and view peers as more salient." Thus, negative school experiences can push juveniles toward others who have similar problems, and can induce acting out in delinquent ways. In fact, some standard practices in schools, including tracking and negative disciplinary actions, have been found to induce negative feelings about school and to result in delinquency (e.g., Bowditch 1993; Frease 1973; Kelly 1974; Kelly and Pink 1982; Messner and Krohn 1990; Polk 1969, 1983; Schafer 1972; Schafer and Polk 1972a, 1972b; Schafer, Olexa, and Polk 1972). (For a more exhaustive review of the influence of the school on delinquency, see Seydlitz and Jenkins 1998.)

Family. The family influences juveniles' commission of deviant deeds. Much research demonstrates that good family relationships, communication, supervision, and discipline reduce delinquency, while delinquency is increased by poor relationships, communication, supervision, and discipline, as well as family deviance and violence. Attachment to parents reduces substance abuse and delinquency, but rejection by parents strongly increases deviant activities (e.g., Agnew 1991; Anderson and Henry 1994; Cernkovich and Giordano 1987; Conger 1976; Hays and Revetto 1990; Liska and Reed 1985; McCord 1991; Messner and Krohn 1990; Poole and Regoli 1979; Simons, Robertson, and Downs 1989; Warr 1993b; Wright and Wright 1994). In fact, delinquency is increased by the combination of weak relationships with parents and strong parental control (Agnew 1991; Ellis 1986; McCord 1991; Seydlitz 1993).

Good family management practices—supervision, communicating clear expectations, and administering positive reinforcement—

are important influences (e.g., Barnes et al. 1994; Cernkovich and Giordano 1987; Denton and Kampfe 1994; Kafka and London 1991; McCord 1991; Peterson et al. 1994). Proper supervision and appropriate, consistent punishment decrease delinquency; poor or excessive parental discipline increases such activities (e.g., Cernkovich and Giordano 1987; Denton and Kampfe 1994; Fagan and Wexler 1987; Laub and Sampson 1988; Messner and Krohn 1990; Sampson and Laub 1994; Wells and Rankin 1988). Also, attachment to the parents can lessen exposure to delinquent peers, while rejection by parents can enhance this exposure (e.g., Agnew 1991; Conger 1976; Hirschi 1969; Jensen 1972; Kaplan, Martin, and Robbins 1982; Poole and Regoli 1979; Warr 1993b).

In addition, parental deviance and instability increase delinquency by negatively influencing attachment, discipline, and supervision (Laub and Sampson 1988; Rosenbaum 1989; Sampson and Laub 1994). Similarly, family drug use increases juveniles' drug use; youths who use drugs tend to come from troubled families (Anderson and Henry 1994; Denton and Kampfe 1994; Johnson and Pandina 1991; Peterson et al. 1994). Moreover, family conflict, parental hostility, neglect, cruelty, and abuse are conducive to delinquency (e.g., Brown 1984; Cernkovich and Giordano 1987; Chesney-Lind 1989; Chesney-Lind and Shelden 1998; Conger et al. 1991; Johnson and Pandina 1991; Rosenbaum 1989; Smith and Thornberry 1995; Wright and Wright 1994). Even so, most of the children who are abused do not become abusive parents, delinquents, or violent criminals (e.g., Smith and Thornberry 1995; Wright and Wright 1994).

Delinquency will not be reduced by forcing children into negative family situations marked by rejection, negative communication patterns, excessively lax or severe supervision and discipline, criminal family members, and abuse. Yet curfew laws force all youths to be at home, presumably with their parents or legal guardians, without ascertaining whether the home is a safe and positive place for these juveniles. Thus the curfew law could have the unintended outcome of increasing child abuse, especially after the abusive parent or guardian is arrested because the juvenile violated the curfew. The law may have much the same effect as has decades of returning runaway juveniles, particularly females, to abusive homes. (For a fuller discussion of this problem, see Chesney-Lind and Shelden 1998.) If children of inadequate, rejecting, or abusive parents are picked up for curfew violation and if the parents are forced into *effective* parent training classes, there is an outside chance that some homes might be improved. Counseling that is not sought voluntarily, however, is usually ineffective.

Moreover, negative relationships in general are powerful motivators of delinquency. The importance of negative relationships and the feelings they cause has been acknowledged only recently in the field of delinquency. In the mid-1980s, researchers examining the effect of the family on delinquency realized that parental rejection, a very negative relationship, is not the opposite of parental attachment, and that it is one of the strongest predictors of delinquency, if not the strongest (Seydlitz and Jenkins 1998).

Agnew's (1992) general strain theory also addresses how negative situations can lead to adverse emotions such as anger, and can result in delinquency. He cites the loss of a positive aspect of a person's life, such as the loss of a rewarding relationship, and the presence of a negative situation, such as victimization or abuse, as possible strains that can lead to anger; this, in turn, can motivate delinquency (Agnew 1992). Juvenile curfew laws, in their etiology and practice, do not help juveniles to deal with strain and negative emotions. It might be possible to strengthen the effect of juvenile curfew laws on delinquency if young people caught violating the laws were counseled or involved in other programs that might support them and help them cope with adversity in their lives.

SUMMARY

Juvenile curfew laws are ineffective for reducing crime because they do not include many of the perpetrators of crime, namely older adolescents and young adults; they do not include the hours when juveniles are most likely to commit offenses; they are based on the incorrect assumption that police crackdowns reduce crime; and they do not fully utilize the theories and research concerning juvenile delinquency. Finally, they do not alter substantially the major correlates of delinquency: exposure to delinquent peers, school, and the family. Delinquent behavior does not occur in isolation, but in a social context consisting of an individual's peers, school, and family.

To clarify why juvenile curfew laws are ineffective and to determine whether they can be made effective, development of a theoretical basis for these laws is necessary. Surveys and interviews with juveniles and their parents are needed to ascertain how they view these laws and their enforcement. In addition, theory, research, and policy might concentrate on the factors that influence the individual's social context. These factors are probably complex and cannot be addressed simply by passing a law requiring youths to be off the streets during particular hours. In addition, future research should examine the reasons why ineffective laws are popular, the functions served by these laws, and the climate that enables such

laws to be enacted. The research questions should include the following: Why is the public willing to forgo longer-term, more encompassing prevention and intervention strategies in favor of ineffective, quick-fix, piecemeal ideas such as juvenile curfew laws?

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